

A 17-year-old collapses playing games at Nanchang Internet Cafe.

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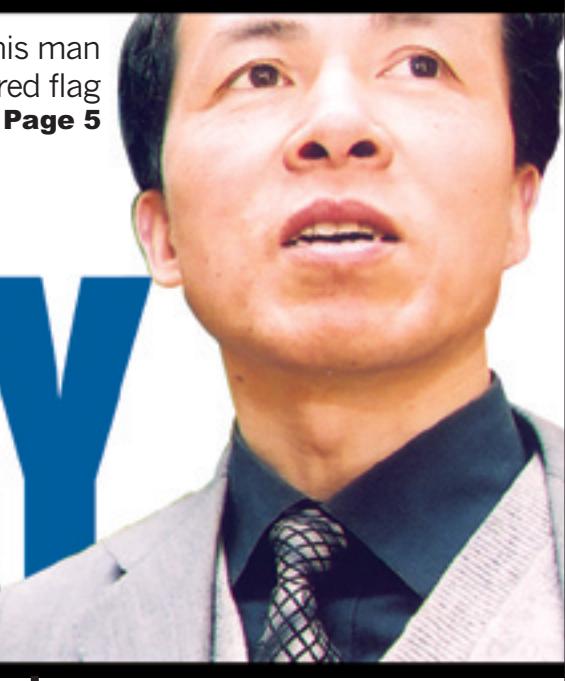
Cherry blossom defines delicate and delicious Japanese dishes.

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Wherever he may roam, this man devotes his life to raising the red flag

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# BEIJING TODAY

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## Don't Believe the Hypo

Needle attackers never had AIDS, say authorities

By Xiao Rong

After four months of wild rumors about AIDS-tainted hypodermic needle attacks, three men were sentenced for syringe assault in separate city trials on Sunday.

Not one needle contained the virus. Fangshan, Haidian and Chaoyang district courts pronounced judgments on three culprits who stabbed Beijing residents with syringes or pointed objects.

Li Chunbao was sentenced to five years for the crime of generating public alarm by making false threats. He stabbed a Beijing woman with a syringe during a spring festival temple fair in Taiping Village in Beijing's Fangshan district this February, generating panic among a crowd of spectators that HIV-contaminated blood had been injected. But in fact the syringe contained "medicine and water", according to a China News Agency report.

A 14-year stretch faces Tao Guiping for committing robbery in the capital by wielding a syringe filled with red nail varnish.

And Yang Guodong was sentenced to one-year's imprisonment for pricking a woman on a bus. His weapon was a sharp iron needle, not a syringe. The woman feared the worst as Yang was captured on the spot.

These very public judgments followed last Monday's sentencing of China's first "pinprick case" in Tianjin, where two criminals broke into a home threatening to inject a woman with HIV-infected liquid. China News Agency reported a "Mr. Han" received 13 years and a "Mr. Tao" 14 years.

The trials appear to have closed the chapter on one of Beijing's most bizarre xiaodao xiaoxi (小道消息, alley grapevine news) that began this year when Tianjin and later Beijing residents lived in fear of attackers wielding HIV-contaminated syringes.

### Urban legend

The uneasy atmosphere began in neighboring Tianjin, starting in January with one version of the rumor that a group of AIDS victims from central China's Henan Province were stabbing residents with contaminated blood in syringes or sharp objects in retaliation against discrimination they had received.

It all started at the end of last year, according to Tianjin newspapers. A person was said to have been stabbed on Christmas Day. After the new year, more and more people — usually young women — were said to have been attacked on busy shopping streets.

As the rumors spread across China around Christmas, a manager of the city's famed Quanyechang department store said business dropped by at least half. Binjiang Boulevard, the main shopping thoroughfare where attacks had allegedly occurred, became a ghost street where the odd nervous shopper scurried between stores.

Local police in Tianjin confirmed attacks had taken place, but they could not confirm whether any involved tainted blood.

"We have had more than a dozen patients come in for HIV testing in the last few weeks," said a doctor at the Tianjin Medical College Hospital. "Most said they were pricked by unknown people with syringe needles, and feared infection."

Police officials declined to say if any arrests had been made.

"It isn't the right time to reveal related details," became the official mantra of local police departments and medical institutions at that time.

### Explanations arrive like buses

Tianjin police on January 17 announced that four suspects accused of at-



China today has 850,000 HIV/AIDS carriers, an increase of more than a quarter of a million on last year's official figure.

Photo provided by Sanlian Life Weekly

tacking people with pointed objects or syringes had been arrested. On the same day, Tianjin TV invited two medical experts to explain a key fact so far missing from the public discourse: the AIDS virus can survive no longer than one minute outside the human body. That includes syringes, significantly reducing the threat.

Not one syringe had HIV, according to the official announcement. In one case, the syringe contained nothing more deadly than red ink.

Hoping to snuff out the rumors, Tianjin Public Security Bureau finally made an official statement on January 24. The statement confirmed a small number of criminals with ulterior motives — "to disrupt social stability" — had been found responsible for the recent syringes and sharp object attacks.

"It is a complete rumor that this is a plan to transmit AIDS through attacks of this sort," the statement went on.

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Beijing railway stations, shopping malls and crowded public places were all rumored to be danger zones.

Photo by Zhuang Jian

This official denial appeared to lend more credence to the rumors. They now reached Beijing, creating a similar panic in the capital. Government offices in Beijing in private circulars warned employees to be on their guard against such attacks in public places.

"I understand the government wants to maintain social stability," said a health expert requesting anonymity, "but their silence didn't stop the rampant rumors. On the contrary, not knowing the truth fostered the spread of the rumors."

"I think it would have been better if the government had made the case known to the public earlier with an authoritative explanation to the event."

### Emergency skills

Tianjin people today still walk on eggshells, fear fueling the AIDS pinprick urban legend, said a PhD at Nankai University.

"Even on campus I jump every time somebody pats me on the shoulder," said Dong Zhao, a student from Nankai University.

A sociology professor at Peking University said the government should disclose every detail to the public when rumors are rife.

"This is what a transparent government should do to protect each citizen," said Professor Fang Wen.

A policeman disagrees.

Mr. Yu said ordinary people need protecting from themselves. "There are plenty of cases more vicious than the alleged HIV-tainted syringe ones. How can we disclose every detail to the common people? We must minimize negative influences on the public."

A sociologist, who requested anonymity, agreed the public knowing the truth doesn't always result in their exercising sound judgment.

"But at least it shows a concern and respect for ordinary people," he said. "The public tend to be feeble in the face of rumors about their safety."

Rumors fail to proliferate if an authoritative voice is heard early, he said.

Valuable crisis-management experience had been accumulated, said Mr. Yang, a director of the Hedong Branch of Tianjin Public Security Bureau.

"We as a governmental organization should curb the spread of the rumor by investigating the crimes and explaining the truth to citizens as quickly as possible instead of only waiting for the rumors to disappear themselves."

"Only this way, can the negative effects of the crisis on social stability be minimized," he said.

## Foreign Investors Tell It Like It Is

By Yang Xiao

Two-hundred and fifty nine new foreign-funded companies opened business in the capital city in the first quarter of 2002, according to city Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation Commission statistics.

But if the capital wants to keep all its 10,549 foreign-funded companies, officials need to go out and listen to their customers. Not only Siemens, but Nokia and CapitaLand say Beijing faces challenges from 30 provinces competing for investment.

With this in mind, Commission officials on Friday visited Nokia, Siemens and CapitaLand for their advice on improving investment conditions.

Singapore real estate company CapitaLand has invested 1 billion yuan in Beijing. Mao Daqing, deputy general manager for Beijing Projects, said the Beijing Foreign Investment Service Center assisted the firm in finding the right site for its Ascott apartments, slashing through regular red tape procedures and approvals.

Ernst H Behrens, CEO of Siemens China, feels the city owes his company for its commitment. Siemens chose Wangjing area as its China headquarters in the early 1990s, he said, but the area is not in a special development zone earning preferential treatment.

"We have invested over 600 million euros in China," said Behrens. "We earned 3.5 billion euros sales income last year and provide 25,000 jobs here."

"Twelve out of 50 holding companies are run in Beijing. We want to share on the special treatment, but we would rather not have to move to the special development zones."

The company would rather expand at its current location, build two extra buildings on site, but related municipal planning departments have placed restrictions that prevent Siemens building, he said.

Behrens agreed better communications with government could settle the issue. Mayor Liu Qi invites the Siemens CEO every year to visit Beijing as a member of his advisory committee.

"They (the Committee) know what they need and can help Mayor Liu's work. Apart from the contact with municipal government, we should get better contact with other governments such as MOFTEC (the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation) and related planning departments," Behrens said.

Communication does indeed solve problems in Beijing, said Wu Jiguo, deputy general manager of joint venture Beijing Capita Nokia Mobile Telecommunications.

"State leaders Jia Qinglin, Wu Yi and Mayor Liu Qi often come to visit our company and try to settle issues we encounter," he said. He appreciated the attention.

### See Foreigner Investors, page 2

During the 2002 FIFA World Cup, Beijing Youth Daily volunteers will file and assemble daily national and international news reports. Volunteers enlisted by Beijing Youth Daily will translate Chinese news reports into English, but the newspaper needs two native English soccer lovers with a knowledge of the beautiful game to participate in polishing reports. Requirements follow:

1. Good English
2. Love of football and familiarity with football phraseology
3. Payment is 50 yuan per day.
- E-mail: wc@bjb.com.cn
- Tel: 6590-2463, 6590-2468

EDITOR: LIU FENG DESIGNER: PANG LEI

# Foreign Cash Debuts in Railways

By Pang Qingjuan

A plan to link Yantai in Shandong Province and Dalian in Liaoning Province by a rail-ferry link was unveiled to business people and investment banks from around 20 countries in Beijing on April 26.

The business promotion, held by the Ministry of Railways, the Shandong provincial and Dalian municipal governments, is the first to seek foreign investment in the history of Chinese railway construction.

The Yantai-Dalian rail link will connect the two cities at the mouth of the Bohai Bay cutting the current

1,000-kilometer rail journey to just 79.4 nautical miles.

The overall investment for the project is scheduled for 3.39 billion yuan, and the investment for construction period is around 2.43 billion yuan. The whole construction is set for competition within two and a half years.

Bohai Railway Ferry Company of China Railway, as the exclusive Chinese developer, will invite foreign investors to establish a joint venture project company. Adopting the BOT (Borrow, Operation and Transfer) pattern, the joint venture will take full responsibility

for the execution and completion of the project and the investment and circulation of funds.

Many foreign companies are interested in this project," said an unnamed official in charge of the project, "It is relatively independent in financial management and transport operation. The internal profitability of the investors is expected to exceed 12 percent."

"The promotion is being carried out well," said Zhang Fuchun, a news section official from the Ministry of Railways, "but we have not yet determined a timetable for the establishment of the joint venture."

## Local Manufacturers Secure Big Contracts

By Zhao Hongyi

Beijing manufacturers won contracts totaling \$5 million dollars from overseas retailing giants and another 15 million yuan from domestic ones at the International Retailers Global Sourcing Fair in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province last week.

The fair, the first of its kind in China, aims at bringing together domestic manufacturers of daily use products and distributors from around the world. The fair attracted 34 overseas retailing groups from 14 countries and regions, including Wal-Mart, Carrefour, Metro, Aeon and Tesco, as well as over 1,000 domestic manufacturers and suppliers.

Among the contracts won by Beijing manufacturers, \$470,000 dollars went to Beida Founder, the computer hardware and software producer. Skin care product manufacturer Dabao secured \$400,000

dollars and Beijing Textile I&E won \$280,000 dollars.

Li Changling, head of the Beijing delegation, summarized afterwards that Beijing suppliers were active and positive in contacting potential buyers at the fair and very familiar with the order placing procedures practiced by the major retail groups.

However he pointed out that, "compared with our counterparts from Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Guangdong provinces, Beijing manufacturers have less market orientation awareness, offer a relatively limited range of products and lag behind the latest trends in terms of their products. He also pointed out that "We are not so up to date in our booth decorating either."

Sources at the fair said the MOFTEC will open an online platform, listing all quality guaranteed Chinese products and manufacturers for world retailers' sourcing.

## Suspect Cosmetics Pulled from Shopping Shelves

By Zhao Hongyi

Dozens of brands of imported cosmetics, including famous names like Chanel, Shiseido and Nivea, were pulled from department store, shopping center and beauty salon shelves in Beijing last weekend. Municipal officials said more check ups would follow after the seven day May 1 holiday.

The Ministry of Health issued two warnings in early March and April, asking importers and retailers to stop selling cosmetics from Europe and Japan, after concerns were raised about the possibility of mad cow disease (bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE) being spread by cosmetics derived from animal products. Stores were given until April 20 to remove such products from their shelves, or face punishment. BSE viruses originated in Europe, and the Japanese government has confirmed three cases, the first outside Europe, since September last year.

The government has required producers to present quality certificates verifying the safety of their products before re-selling, or withdraw the products. On April 25, Beijing health bureau and the Beijing Bureau of Quality Super-

vision and Inspection and Quarantine checked imported cosmetics in city markets and beauty parlors. Makeup including perfumes, lipsticks and creams were seized.

"The seizure was in line with a March 4 notice from the Ministry of Health, which forbids the import of cosmetics containing certain animal tissues from countries or regions where BSE has been identified, unless official safety certificates are produced," said Gu Qun, director of the supervision office under the Beijing Municipal Health Bureau.

The sales manager of Shiseido's Salon des Cosmetiques at Oriental Plaza in downtown Beijing said, "Yes, we have withdrawn all the products in question from our shelves here."

While most representatives of the cosmetics producers and their embassies said they would abide by the local government's rulings, illegally imported products are still being sold online and in beauty salons around the city.

"We'll carry out an overall inspection after the May 1 vacation," said Gu Qun. "We have to clean up this market for our consumers' sake."

## Foreign Investors

(Continued from page 1)

Nokia launched the 50-50 joint venture with the former Beijing Telecommunications Equipment Factory (now Capital Group) in 1995. Nokia has invested 10 billion yuan on its 10-hectare industrial area in the Beijing Development Area to manufacture handsets and cellular system equipment.

It notched up \$1.2 billion exports last year, a quarter of Beijing's total exports.

"Although we did a good job last year, we met difficulties at customs," said Wu. "Our customers order us to transport goods to somewhere on the other side of the globe within two days. But the customs and other departments delayed them for miscellaneous regulations and procedures."

Wu Yi personally came to observe their difficulties, said Wu. "She quickly asked for the relevant officials to come and deal with these matters. That really impressed us," said Wu.

Behrens told *Beijing Today* he lived in Beijing 21 years ago. "There

was no traffic on the street and I often took a bicycle between the office and my place at the Minzu Hotel," he said.

"It was difficult to get a taxi. And in winter there was industrial pollution."

Five years ago when he came back the changes surprised him.

"There are now so many cars that lack of parking has become a serious problem. To be fair, the air pollution situation has improved, especially with winning the Olympic Games bid."

In Siemens, the hardship allowance expats received was abolished a couple of years ago, he said. This indicates no difference in the infrastructure and living conditions with the foreign employees' homelands.

Now 99 percent of employees are local citizens here in Nokia and Siemens. To build a series of product lines for Nokia handsets, Nokia invited 30 handset accessories multinationals to build factories beside it. "They can get orders from Nokia if they moved in BDA. We altogether could provide 10,000 jobs." Wu says.

## China 'LG' Sues Korea 'LG'

By Shan Jinliang

A lawsuit lodged by Beijing Languang Elevators, trademark "LG", against Korea's LG Industrial and LG Electronics ended Saturday with a failure to reach a settlement.

Beijing Languang Elevator, a state-owned enterprise under the China Construction Machinery Corporation, says they registered the trademark "LG" and the logo as a sixth category of the commodity list (elevators) with the Trademark Bureau of the General Administration of Industry and Commerce in 1991.

The registration was valid from August 10, 1991 to August 10, 2001, at which time the company re-registered the trademark, according to Han Tao, a senior manager of the company.

During Saturday's hearing, LG Industrial alleged that LG Electronics, as one of its subsidiary companies, has registered

trademark and merge with us," said Han, "but it only offered a price of 100,000 yuan, which angered us, so we insisted on 10 million yuan, and the negotiations broke off."

Then in 1997 LG Electronics registered the trademark "LG" for LG Industrial and began to use it around China, which was treated as a violation of trademark by Languang. The Chinese company applied to the trademark appraisal committee of the Trademark Bureau to withdraw the "LG" trademark of the Korean company.

The withdrawal was effected on December 28, 2000. But the Chinese company still found that LG-marked elevators were being sold, and brought an action against the company.

"In terms of the 20% profits made by the Korean company, their illegal income is around 1 billion yuan," Han told *Beijing Today*, "but the issue is one of our dignity, as the Korea 'LG' looked down upon us in the past."

The Korean side rejected the terms, opting instead for another day in court.

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## CD Ticket for Tech Expo

By Xiao Rong

A new kind of electronic ticket in the form of a CD will be used for the first time at this year's Beijing International Sci-Tech Industries Expo.

The electronic tickets will mainly be used at the China International Exhibition Center, the main exhibition site of the Expo, and are now available for reservation.

Compared with traditional paper ticket, the CD tickets are virtually impossible to pirate, according to the Expo's organizing committee.

The eight-centimeter CD ticket includes retrospective information about past Expos and a guide to this year's Expo, as well as an introduction to some of the participating enterprises.

## Capital Airport Cuts Parking Fees

By Wang Ling

Parking fees at Capital Airport have been slashed by as much as two-thirds as of the beginning of this month.

It is the first fare reduction since the car park was put into operation three years ago.

According to the old standard, parking fees were calculated by hours and vehicle size. The fee for a small vehicle parked for 24 hours was 236 yuan. For a large vehicle, the fee was 470 yuan for the same period, a price most drivers found prohibitive.

According to the new price schedule, fees are calculated for a maximum of eight hours. So the maximum fees are now 80 yuan for a small vehicle and 160 for a large vehicle.

Many passengers going away for a few days are willing to drive to the airport themselves. But the exorbitant parking fees have until now been a disincentive.

## Cable Radio Offers Listeners More Variety

By Zhu Lin

Western Pop Music and Classical Music Cable Broadcasting stations, the first cable radio stations in China, began broadcasting May 1.

The stations offer CD-quality music programs 24-hours a day. Sponsored by Beijing People's Broadcasting Station (BPBS), the western pop music station is at FM 98.6 and the classical music station at FM 97.

Chen Xiaobin, director of the technology department of the two stations, said the time is right to launch such specialized stations, because the technology required and the market for western pop and classical music are both mature. The cable radio is available to approximately 2.5 million families in Beijing, meaning it can be accessed by at least 7.5 million Beijing residents. "As long as you get cable TV at home, you can listen to our stations," said Chen.

The western pop station features pop, jazz, blues, rock 'n' roll, country and light music. It also offers segments of New Age and other marginal styles. "Originally, those kinds of music only shared 11% of the programs of BPBS, but the demand for these styles is increasing," said Jiang Gongmin, general director of BPBS.

Most families in Beijing already have cable sockets allowing access to cable TV programs at home. The socket has two connections, one for TV, and another for FM broadcasting. Cable subscribers can connect the FM connection to the tuner of their hi-fi at home. No additional fee is charged besides the fee for the cable TV.



## Tangka: US\$4 Million

*Anthony Lin, chairman of Christie's Asia auction house, speaks beside an exceptionally rare early Ming Dynasty's Imperial embroidered silk tapestry, known as a "tangka", which measures 3.3 by 2.1 meters, depicting the wrathful Rakayamari embracing his consort Vajraveltali, in Hong Kong April 29, 2002. The tangka, which was expected to fetch an estimated \$1.2 million (HK\$10 million), set a world record for any Asian textile when it sold for \$4,013,663 (HK\$30,874,100) after fierce bidding on Monday.*

Reuters Photo

# Security Guards Ban Photo of Office Tower

By Sun Ming

Security staff stopped a woman taking pictures outside the China Merchants Tower, saying she could not photograph the building.

"I just wanted to take some pictures of the office building," Miss Chen told *Beijing Today*. Security approached and stopped her.

"They said 'This is our precinct. Our realty management company regulates people not to take pictures in front of the building,'" Chen said.

Chen had not entered the building. She was standing outside.

Chen went to Hang Hua Realty Management, which manages the China Merchants Tower, which is located next to the Motorola Building near the World Trade Center. Hang Hua is also in the building.

There she met a Mr. Cai, who called himself "a member of the security personnel".

According to Chen, Mr. Cai refused her request. Cai alleged the open ground in front of the building also belongs to the company.

When asked whether people could take ordinary tourist pictures, Cai said 'no' but offered no explanation says Chen.

"He asked me to take pictures from Guomao Qiao, 50 meters from the building," she said. "I was very angry with his attitude."

Li Ang, a customer service representative, allegedly explained the reason to Chen.

"He said there are lots of foreign-owned enterprises in the building. So there are many business secrets in their building too."

"To prevent commercial spies from stealing the companies' information, they don't allow people to take pictures freely in front of the building. He said ordinary tourists can take pictures, but they should inform them first."

A *Beijing Today* reporter visited Zhao Junya, manager of Hang Hua Realty Management the same day.

"With our permission, ordinary tourists can take pictures in front of our building," said Zhao.

Zhao denied Li Ang's explanation of business secrecy and said people who want to take pictures in front of their building for commercial use should pay them money in advance.

"Some advertising companies even used our building as a background when they took pictures for their models. We certainly ask them to pay money," said

Zhao. "And they usually pay money without any dispute."

When asked whether there is a regulation in the agreements between the company and companies of the office building, Zhao did not answer directly.

"No agreement can include all the details," said Zhao.

"Our responsibility is to serve all the companies in the building. I think any person would say 'no' if he were asked whether he minds others taking pictures in front of his house at random."

"The open ground before the building is also our precinct, according to city planning regulations," added Zhao.

According to Beijing Land & Housing Management Bureau, the Administration Regulation of Realty Management says nothing about photography outside office building.

## Poppy Boo-Boo Costs Restaurant Owner 18 Months in Jail

By Ivy Zhang

A restaurant owner who spiced up his hotpot with poppy shell powder never expected to end up in hot water himself.

Haidian People's court last week sentenced Bi Jinxiang, 31, to one and a half years in prison. He was fined 3,000 yuan for using the drugs to cheat customers.

But Bi, a primary school graduate from Chongqing, Sichuan province, said he had no idea his actions were illegal. His 60-plus-square-meter Yuyuan Restaurant in Wanquan-zhuang, Haidian restaurant served Sichuan spicy food, specializing in fish hotpot (shuizhuyu 水煮鱼) and roast chicken (shaojigong 烧鸡公).

He used the powder to "make the hotpot not too hot", he said.

About to be led to jail, Bi told reporters he was "not satisfied" with the verdict.

"I never thought of improving business by using the poppy powder. The powder made no difference to my business."

But Judge Cai Li from the Haidian People's Court told *Beijing Today* the daily cashflow of Bi's restaurant increased from 1,000 yuan to about 16,000 yuan after he started using the addictive brew.

Bi said in his hometown, people often use poppy powder to spruce up a hotpot. "It's just a kind of spice. But who knows it is not allowed here in Beijing?"

"I never knew that the poppy shell powder was a drug. Nobody promotes this kind of awareness."

Bi had bought 2,500 grams of powder at a Chongqing medicine market for 140 yuan. He mixed the powder with peppers and garlic and put them in the fish hotpot and roast chicken.

But Bi told nobody about the poppy, according to Judge Cai. Bi said he told anyone who asked and others besides. Based on an anonymous accusation letter, police examined and sealed up the restaurant on February 22, 2002. They seized 466 grams of poppy powder.

The poppy powder, as determined by police deploying criminal science technology, contains codeine and narcotin. It should be treated as a drug according to United Nations Narcotic Laboratory regulations," said Judge Cai.

This was the second case of this kind at Haidian since the new 1997 criminal law. As to how many restaurants in Beijing use the powder, Judge Cai said he can't name the exact figure.

"Without the accusation letter, we might not get our hands on this case."

"We put poppy powder on bread to make it taste better," said Rebecca Zahr, a Swedish embassy employee. "The difference is that we know that the poppy powder is put on the bread. But people here do not know it."



Dongfang Yiyuan waiter Wang Wei tries to wake up the dead

## LAST SUPPER

By Sun Ming

Customers consumed 200,000 shrimps, 10,000 kilograms celebrating the city's Olympic success on July 13 last year, according to *Beijing Youth Daily*.

Today, Ghost Street (簋街) is gone. Once a bustling and busy thoroughfare beloved of Beijingers and foreign residents alike, only three restaurants remain in the eastern section of the street.

"Their business is not flourishing like before," says Xu

Yajun, director of Beixinqiao Street Office in charge of Gui Jie (Ghost Street) demolition. "In order to canvass business, some waiters have to invite customers from outside."

The Dongfang Yiyuan, Fengshengzhai and Yuanyuan restaurants will also all soon be removed.

Famous for mutton chop (羊蝎子), hot crab (香辣蟹), hot shrimp (麻辣小龙虾), and boiled fish (水煮鱼), restaurants will return next year after the street's broadening to 60 meters wide.

Photo by Guo Tiegu

## Doctor Beaten Up in Emergency Department

By Sun Ming

A doctor was beaten up by a patient's son in the emergency department of Beijing Union Hospital on Friday last week.

He broke the bridge of the Dr. Liu Bao's nose and dislocated his left arm.

According to the hospital, a man more than 30 years old crashed into the emergency department in the afternoon that day. He said he was looking for the medical records of his father Cao Zhixin.

Cao, who suffered rectum cancer, had a long-term fixed medical record in the hospital. Such medical records are usually deposited at the records room. But Cao's record had been transferred to the emergency department last Wednesday when Cao came there for emergency treatment.

The medical records hadn't been immediately sent back

to the records room, and so Cao's son looked for it in the emergency department," said Yan Hong, a hospital administration office employee.

Dr. Liu asked the man his father's name and helped him to look for it on his desk.

"Dr. Liu finally didn't find the medical records and asked the man to look for it at other desks himself as he still had other patients to examine," said Yan.

But the man rummaged about the other medical records angrily threatening to beat Liu if he found them.

The man found his father's records on another desk, then blaming Dr. Liu for the records not being in the long-term records room, beat him for about 10 minutes.

Two other doctors on the spot said they couldn't stop the beating as the man was too strong. They dialed '110' for police.

However, the man fled the scene before police arrived. Dongcheng Public Security Subbureau declined to publish any information about the case before they finished investigation.

"Even whether the man has been arrested, we can't tell you," a policeman told a *Beijing Today* reporter.

Last July 25, Dr. Wang Renzhi, of the same hospital suffered a serious arm injury after a dead patient's bereaved son hit him with a picture frame after failing to find an X-ray record.

## Snake Tempts Fruit Vendor into Fall

By Ivy Zhang

An elaborate medicinal snake ruse cost an innocent fruit vendor 4,300 yuan in cash and a new Motorola mobile phone worth about 1,200 yuan last Thursday.

Luo Xin, 42, of Henan province, bought into the "mini silver needle snake" sting staged by three hoaxsters.

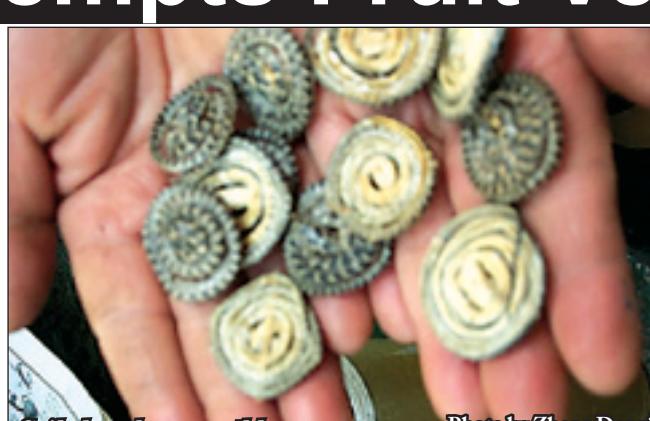
Luo and her husband run a fruit stand by a residential compound behind the Yayuncun Post Office.

A man in his 30s with a strong southern accent calling himself "Xiao Yuanjun" came to order 20 fruit baskets and two cartons of 555 cigarettes for the director of Yayuncun Hospital.

To fix delivery details, Xiao asked Luo to accompany him to the hospital about 500 meters away and meet the director. As the two approached the hospital, a woman in her 30s stepped out from the back gate and greeted Xiao.

Xiao greeted "Sister Li," apparently connected to a religious order. Sister Li said the director was at a meeting and asked them both to wait.

"Then they got to talking about these



Coiled snakes - worthless

Photo by Zhang Danni

mini silver needle snakes," said Luo. Sister Li popped back inside the hospital and came out holding a dried snake, wrapped in a paper package.

Xiao bought the snake for 800 yuan. It could be used to treat drug addicts in his hometown, he said. Then Xiao asked Sister Li if she had any more, for "his aunt," who operated a pharmacy in Hong Kong.

Sister Li said maybe a friend had some. She'd go see. Then absentmindedly she asked Luo if she wanted to come

along too. She told Xiao to stay and wait for the hospital director.

As luck would have it, the two women met Sister Li's friend as he was coming down the stairs from his fifth-floor apartment. "The guy was a little fat and real stupid-looking," said the hoax victim.

Sister Li asked the "stupid-looking" man if he had any snakes in stock. He nipped upstairs to his apartment and came back 10 minutes later, carrying about 100. Sister Li said she would buy them all for 600 yuan each, a total 60,000 yuan. But, oh dear, she only had 3,000 yuan. She asked Luo to help her out.

Luo rushed back to her stall and borrowed 3,000 yuan from her cousin and took 100 yuan out of her money box. She didn't tell her family why she

needed the money.

When Luo returned, the "stupid-looking" guy handed Sister Li 12 snakes for a total 6,100 yuan. But 6,100 yuan wasn't enough, he said. Sister Li removed her ring and gave it to the man. "It's still not enough," he said.

Sister Li then plucked the cell phone from Luo's neck and handed it to the man.

"I didn't protest," Luo said. "I just thought 'That's a downpayment and I will get it back.'"

Earlier, Sister Li had confided in Luo that they both stood to make an 80,000 yuan killing on the 100 snakes when they sold them on to Xiao.

"I didn't care about the bonus, but just wanted to help them," said Luo.

Luo then took the 12 snakes to Xiao who was waiting at the hospital 100 meters down the road. But Xiao had gone.

"Then I turned around and the two others were gone. Then I realized I had been cheated. I am simple-minded. They all looked so nice."



Photo by Huang Jianhua  
The Mig-8 in action

## Flying Fire Fighter

By Feng Yihua

Sinking the 2-cubic-meter-tank below its fuselage into a pool, the latest addition to Beijing's forest fire fighting force took one minute to fill up with water. Then the Mig-8 circled an imaginary fire.

The helicopter dropped two tons of water from the sky, which covered an area of more than 700 square meters. The helicopter had taken off for its first exercises from the Zhangjiawan Military Airport in Tongzhou District in Beijing. This is the first helicopter in Beijing for use against forest fires.

There are two Mig-8s at the airport. From March 1 to May 31, they will be on call for fires in and around Beijing. Each Mig-8 can cover a 900-kilometer range.

## Forbidden City Revamps for Visitor Influx

By Miao Yajie

With the May Day multitudes approaching, the Forbidden City has jiggled up its organization to handle the influx.

The record flow of visitors caught administrators unawares during May 1 to 7, 2000, the first ever seven-day holiday in China.

May 2nd, 2000 set a record in the history of the ancient palace, with more than 120,000 tourists stepping in and out of the former Ming and Qing dynasty emperors' homes. The ideal flow is 20,000 a day, according to the Forbidden City.

Forbidden City managers responded this year with:

- Ticket windows to increase from 11 to 24, with two temporary ticket vans in service in front of Wumen Gate May 1 to 4

- To decrease the flow of visitors at Wumen Gate, the Donghuamen Gate will also open during the first five days of May, with security staff and road signs added along the way

- Three more toilets to open near Longzongmen Gate and Dongpailoumen Gate

- 20 temporary toilets placed near the Supreme Harmony Hall Square and inside Shenwumen Gate

- From May 1 to 4, the Forbidden City will open one hour early at 7:30am.

The last measure accommodates an influx of dawn flag-raising ceremony spectators who come to Tiananmen Square and jam Wumen Gate waiting to enter the Forbidden City at 8:30am. Regular hours will resume on May 5.



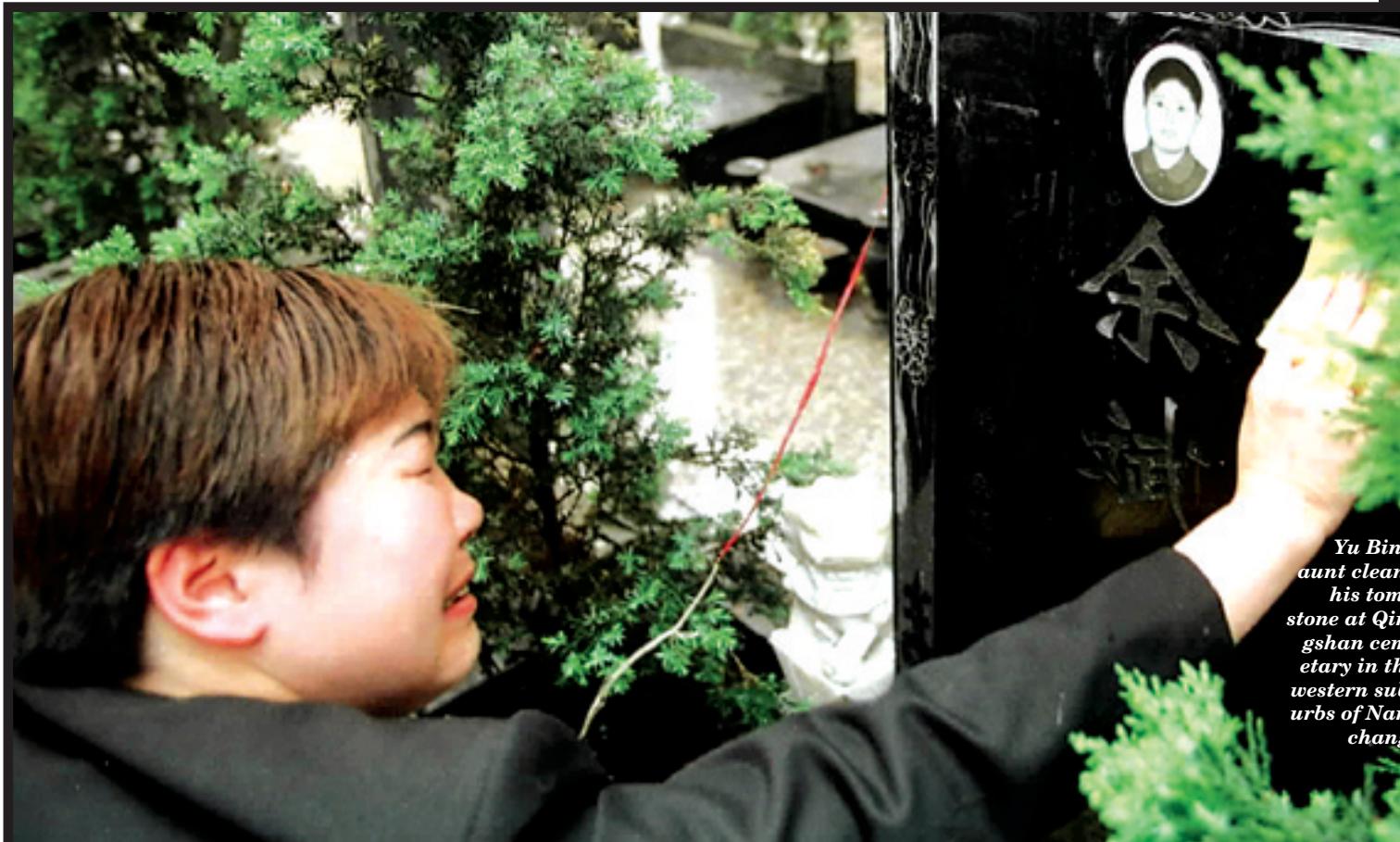
Photo by Chen Shuyi

## Children Paint for Planet

By Su Wei

Omkar Joshi (right), 8, an International School of Beijing (ISB) student from India, begins work on his third-prize winning poster "Let us not destroy earth - Save the earth" at the square of the former National Library, near Beihai Park.

Omkar was one of about 100 primary school students who participated in the poster contest for the Roots and Shoots Beijing Office. Roots and Shoots, founded by Dr. Jane Goodall, promotes environmental and animal welfare awareness.



*Yu Bin's aunt cleans his tomb stone at Qingshan cemetery in the western suburbs of Nanchang.*

# Youth Dies at Net Cafe

By Li Meijuan/  
Lin Yanxing (Xinhua)/ Su Wei

**17**-year-old senior high school student collapsed and died while playing an on-line game at an Internet Cafe in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province earlier this month.

## A 'normal' school day

Yu Bin left home as usual after lunch on Friday, April 17. "He always left for school at the same time," the boy's father told Xinhua News Agency. Neither parent, who have requested their names not be revealed, had any idea that their son had not attended class since January this year.

As usual, the son instead went directly to the Huirong Internet Cafe, to play the on-line game Legend, in front of computer No.30.

Xiong Kai, who got to know Yu Bin at the net cafe, said shortly after he got there at 5:30 p.m. that day, he suddenly heard a loud thump. "Yu, who had been sitting beside me, had fallen off his chair and was lying on his back, hands shaking, and breathing heavily."

Xiong alerted Wan Shuiyong, the duty manager at the net cafe, who immediately sent for a doctor from the nearby Hecaojie Community Medical Service Center.

According to Dr. Zeng Guoqiang, the boy showed no signs of life when he arrived shortly after. "All the symptoms he reportedly displayed after collapsing are typical of sudden cardio-cerebral failure," he said.

After being transferred to the Emergency Department of the Nanchang Number Three People's Hospital, Yu Bin was officially pronounced dead.

The parents were devastated at the news that their son had died at an Internet cafe. "It is the Internet cafe that killed my son! It is the game that killed my son!" Yu Bin's mother told Xinhua.

According to the parents, the boy had been admitted to hospital just one week before he died. "He had a severe cold and had been complaining of chest pains. He spent four days in the Number Three People's Hospital, but they could find nothing seriously wrong with him!" Yu was sent home with medicine for stomachache.

## School denies responsibility "Our fault is a minor one"

Yu Bin's parents regarded him as an obedient child. If he had not arrived home by a specified time, they would page him, and would know where he was by the number he called back from.

According to Xinhua, Yu Bin could be seen playing games at the net cafe almost every day. Jie Libing, the teacher in charge of Yu's grade three class

conceded that Yu had not been to class since January.

Vice-headmaster of Yu Zhang Middle School Lei Yingfang said, the school is constantly struggling with net cafes. Lei told Beijing Today that the parents were not publicly blaming the school, and probably thought themselves largely responsible. "There are too many negative reports. The Publicity Department of Jiangxi Province and Nanchang local government has also suggested not talking about the incident any more."

Lei added, "We only calculate the student numbers based on the number who have registered and paid tuition fees."

## Regulations rarely enforced

Although there is a regulation stipulating that minors are not allowed to enter Internet cafes except on weekends and during national holidays, it is rarely enforced.

When talking to Xinhua, Yu Bin's parents asked how their son could have been allowed to spend almost every day playing games in the Internet cafe where a prominently displayed sign read "Minors are not allowed inside" hung on the wall, and questioned the city's law administrative department's failure to control and regulate Internet cafes.

According to Luo Weihua, Director of the Jiangxi Telecommunication Market Supervision Department, there are over 3,000 Internet cafes in the province, including around 300 unregistered. There are about 430 Internet cafes in Nanchang.

"But there are only a dozen or so people in the department responsible for supervision."

Luo said that while an Internet cafe breaching the regulations can be fined up to 10,000 yuan, and closed down after three violations, no fine of over 5,000 yuan has been handed out.

He emphasized that the law administrative power for the telecommunication department is confined to Nanchang. "There are no telecommunication supervision offices in cities outside the provincial capital Nanchang.

"We need to think about the practical condition. It is a national problem, every Internet Cafes has people aged below 18 playing games."

## Jurisdiction remains unclear

According to Xinhua, when the officials from the Telecommunication Supervision Department and police visited Huirong Internet Cafe on the afternoon of April 23, almost a week after Yu Bin died, they found nine of the 22 customers present were under 18 years old.

The operating license was suspended and the net cafe was closed down, however no fine was issued.



*Primary school students play computer games at a game bar in Nanchang.*



*A small net cafe near the Huirong net cafe advertises cards for on-line gaming.*

Luo said in March this year, it was announced that responsibility for supervising net cafes would be transferred from the telecommunications department to the cultural department, and therefore, "We have no legal right to administrate this incident."

He said the Nanchang government has requested that the Huirong Internet Cafe be closed "temporally" and "still requires further investigation to determine how much it should be fined and which department will issue the fine."

Shen Zhaohui, the registered proprietor of the net cafe reportedly made a "self-criticism," pledging to refrain in future from persuading minors to enter Internet cafes.

The Nanchang local government has also declared its intention to clean up the city's Internet cafes from May.

Photos by Chen Chunyuan (Xinhua)

## Update

On January 25, Beijing Today published a story titled "The Search for War Victims," in which it was reported that more than 40,000 Chinese forced to work in Japan during the World War II remain uncompensated.

A ruling in a Japanese court last Friday marked a step forward for Chinese forced laborers in their claims for compensation.

## Fifteen Chinese Forced Laborers Compensated 165 million Yen

By Xinhua / Ivy Zhang

According to a ruling handed down Saturday in Japan's Fukuoka District Court, Mitsui Mining is required to pay 165 million yen in compensation to 15 Chinese forced to work as laborers in Japan during the Second World War.

In the ruling, Judge Motoaki Kimura found that the men were captured and transported to Japan against their will, and forced to work under

**S**tudents make up the largest group of netizens in China, accounting for 24% of the 56.6 million total. Fifty-two percent of all Chinese netizens are aged below 24, and nearly 16 percent do their net surfing at Internet cafes.

In April last year, a regulation governing operation of Internet services was issued by the four government departments charged with managing Internet cafes.

Police are responsible for issues such as online crimes and identification registration upon entering an Internet cafe. The cultural department is responsible for ensuring "unhealthy" computer games are not played.

The commercial and industrial trial department has the responsibility to check and issue operation licenses as well as ensure that only on-line games are provided (net cafes are not permitted to offer computer games that can be played off-line).

The telecommunication department is responsible for rechecking the permission operation and the service quality and for enforcing regulations governing minors.

## Small investment and quick returns

A 20-computer net cafe can be set up for around 100,000 yuan. "Only one computer with an Internet connection is enough," a person who had considered setting up a net cafe told Beijing Today. "Students are mainly interested in playing games. So only having computers equipped for playing network games is enough."

The charge for playing games at net cafes is around three or four yuan per hour, and maybe twelve yuan per night.

According to Beijing People's Congress representative Zhou Zhiliang, net cafes both registered and unregistered often provide "special services," such as letters requesting leave for the students, food, drinks and cigarettes and even simple beds.

Zhou points out most Internet cafes have two doors. "One is for the administrative department to come in, and the other is for students to run out when there is a check." He also expressed concern that some proprietors even allow students to "mortgage" their books and clothing.

An official of the Haidian branch of the Commercial and Industrial Administrative Bureau who declined to be named,

says that even when net cafes have their license suspended or equipment confiscated, the manager often simply invests in new equipment and opens a new one. The fine for providing off-line games is only 100 or 200 yuan per set.

## Young people the most enthusiastic users

"Very exciting!" are the most frequently heard words when students describe the games in net cafes. Outside a net cafe in Haidian Library Tower, a 16-year-old student said he and his classmates enjoy playing the action game "Half Life".

Yang Xiong, Director of the Juvenile Research Institute under the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, says Internet surfing is a basic technique for living in the modern world.

"But juveniles are used to simply following their interests to direct their actions."

A judge in Haidian District, Shang Xiuyun, says almost one sixth of Beijing's 1.71 million primary and middle school students have visited Internet Cafes. Over 40% of the 100,000 frequent visitors frequently visit pornographic websites.

## Education needs to be improved

Over 1.7 million primary and middle school students in Beijing have access to around 4,000 Internet connected computers at schools. They are not allowed to use these computers to play games or surf the Internet.

The current education in China mainly focuses on ensuring youngsters develop normal and moral standards.

"Students can more easily lose their direction in the face of conflicts between social 'negatives' and the positive school influence," says Wu Shoulun, Beijing People's Congress Representative.

Chen Jianhua, Director of Nanchang University Psychology Consulting Center, points out that most students try to seek relief from the emphasis on school marks by family and school. "The current education system is one-dimensional, characterized by teacher talking and students listening."

"Games played on computers provide a way of interacting, and provide a release that students can easily come to depend on."

(Su Wei)

extremely adverse conditions.

He also upheld the claim that Mitsui Mining and the Japanese government were jointly culpable.

Plaintiff's lawyer Toyaji Tachiki, said at a press conference after the ruling it was "a courageous ruling that may affect other similar pending lawsuits," while noting that the Japanese government, as a defendant in the trial, failed to accept any responsibility.

There are currently a number of lawsuits being heard in local Japanese courts dealing with Chinese forced labor.



# Keeper of the Flame

By Shi Xinyu

**M**y career is my life," says Fan Qiangming, head of Beijing Red World Science and Technology Developing Center. In the 50-year-old's own words, his career of the past 20 years has been "spreading Marxism, the red belief."

Fan's "Red World" is currently comprised of the Gongming Chuangxin Bookstore and [www.redworld.com.cn](http://www.redworld.com.cn), a bookstore and a web site devoted to works and theories of or related to Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Vladimir Lenin, Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. Both the shop and the web site are based in his one-bedroom home, occupying a 60-square-meter space at the western end of Fenzi Hutong, off Xidan Beidajie.

## A Boy Crying out for Justice

Fan was born in Shanghai in 1952, the fourth son of a policeman. When he was three, his father was falsely accused of having been a wealthy farmer in his old hometown before the establishment of New China. After the father spent one year in prison, Fan's family was forced to leave Shanghai and return to the hometown: a village in Cangshan County of Zhejiang Province.

During childhood, before he came to understand the situation, Fan says he resented his father for the hardship he had brought on the family. "My family were looked down upon and kept under strict surveillance," he recalls. "And that surveillance caused the death of my little brother."

When Fan was 14, he became a Red Guard. Like all youth during the Cultural Revolution, he took the highest pride in this role. One day, all the school's Red Guards were gathered in the schoolyard to listen to a speech by the head of local revolutionary committee, who was later shown to be the one who had framed Fan's father. Before the speech started, he asked Fan to come to the front. "How could a son of a people's enemy stand among the Red Guards?" the man shouted through a loudspeaker in Fan's left ear.

"I felt a blank in my mind when I stepped to the front, and was shocked when he suddenly shouted at me." Fan speaks slowly, his two hands firmly grasping each other. "Then I could hear nothing. I stared as people peeled the red armband off from my right sleeve, but my body could not move even a little in defense. Finally, I was pushed out of the schoolyard. I could not remember at all how I managed to walk back home."

After this incident, Fan had a long talk with his father, and made up his mind to help him clear his name. In the following 24 years, he studied the law by himself and wrote letters to various departments presenting evidence on his father's behalf and crying out for justice. The first few years were the most difficult. Many people tried to dissuade him, and he endured countless threats, taunts and sneers. "The need to uncover the truth encouraged me to face all difficulties. And this experience of my childhood and youth is the reason I care so much about justice and truth today."

## Exhibition Exhausts Life Savings

Fan's father was officially "rehabilitated" in 1979, and Fan became a teacher of politics in a secondary school in Wenzhou County, Zhejiang Province. A course he undertook at Zhejiang Education College in the spring of 1982 changed his life. Fan read *The Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels. "I was won over by their theories at once," he says.

That was the time when the market economy was first being introduced to China's southeast coastal regions, and Wenzhou was a city famous for producing and trading small general merchandise, such as needles and fasteners. While everyone else was busy making money, Fan devoted all his time and money to purchasing and reading books on or related to Marxism. The more he read, the deeper he became absorbed.

In 1986, one year after he joined the Communist Party, Fan



changed his name from "Youming" to "Qiangming," which he says expresses his willingness to be a champion for Marxism, and made up his mind to devote the rest of his life to popularizing Marxism among the people.

Fan first won fame in Wenzhou in the summer of year 1991, by staging an exhibition named "The Great Life of Karl Marx" to mark the Chinese Communist Party's 70th anniversary. The exhibition cost Fan around forty thousand yuan, which as he says "was enough to build a three-storey house at that time." That used up not only all his family savings, but also put him in debt to some friends. Despite the sneers and doubts of a few, Fan had no doubt the money was well spent.

Rather than gratifying him, the success of the exhibition made Fan feel somewhat heavy-hearted. "People's knowledge of Marx is so limited," he sighs, "some cadres even asked me when Karl Marx and Mao Zedong first met!" Fan realized that it was necessary to find a channel that would reach more people to spread Marxism besides simply teaching in classrooms.

## From Red Newspaper in Wenzhou to Red World in Beijing

Between 1992 and 1994, Fan served as chief editor of two local Wenzhou newspapers. These turned out to be stepping-stones to expanding his career. "Besides regular reports, I insisted on having a column on the first page to introduce Marxist theories and to analyze social and economic phenomena in accordance with these theories," Fan says. "Because I often used red characters on the first page, people called them 'red newspapers.'"

Fan's newspaper won applause as well as criticism. "Some people maintained that I used the columns to win myself fame," he says with a bitter smile, "That made me somewhat depressed. So I asked for a long leave in the summer of 1994 and spent over a year at home, summing up what I had learnt over the past twelve years and planning the next step of my career."

In 1996, Fan came to Beijing with his wife and children, where he started working as an editor for a magazine named Marxism and Reality. "After spending some time in Beijing, I realized that in this capital of a socialist country, there was no bookstore specializing in Marxist theory," Fan says. "So with an intention to fill this gap, I registered Beijing Red World Science and Technology Developing Center, and then opened Gongming Chuangxin Bookstore on National Day, 1998 and launched [www.redworld.com.cn](http://www.redworld.com.cn) in May, 2000."

Though Fan's Red World is well known among Marxist believers and researchers, it is still far from supporting itself financially. "From the day I opened the bookstore, I knew the books could never become best sellers," Fan says. "I am an idealist but not naive!"

"Well, I know I first should think of ways to let the Red World live on. Otherwise, all the 'meaning' is nonsense," Fan says. With the establishment of the Beijing Red World Science and Technology Development Center, Fan has tried to sell some patented products of the center, such as Marx and Engels brooches and souvenir badges of some important events. "Recently I have been negotiating with some enterprises that have the intention of advertising on our web site," he says.

A couple of days ago, the head of a shoe factory in Wenzhou promised to donate one hundred thousand yuan to the web site, on the condition that Fan add several pictures of the company's shoes to the homepage. Fan refused the offer. "Many cases failed like this one," he says, "but I can still find ways to let my Red World live on, and I have the confidence to see it develop."

Fan has a plan to build a Marxism Exhibition Center in Beijing in the future. "I have already started working on it," he says, pointing at the blueprint he designed by himself, hanging on the wall. "I am not sure if I can complete it in my lifetime, but I have made it my next goal on my way to spread Marxism."

# Dancers Get Physical



Photo by Tang Jun

By Zhang Huan

The Beijing Modern Dance Company last Thursday wound up a series of performances and lectures at eight local colleges as part of the Fourth Beijing Modern Dance Festival. The final performance was staged at the Beijing Film Academy.

The show started with the dancers introducing themselves and their stories by way of movement. "I come from Shanghai. I had a cat. . .", "I once fell in love with a boy in my class. I was the tallest among the girls while he was the shortest among the boys..." and "When I was a child, I went swimming with my brother..."

"We modern dancers are exploring the big-

gest possibility for our bodies," artistic director Willy Tsao told the audience. "We want to liberate every inch of muscle and every joint, so we can physically communicate whatever we want to say."

Speaking of the reaction of students during the company's college tour, Tsao said, "Different colleges show different personalities. At Tsinghua University, students were rather reserved when watching our performance, but they raised many profound questions, which showed the depth of their interest, while students at Beijing Second Foreign Language Institute were very warm and noisy, always applauding."

Tsao concedes that not all teachers and students reacted positively. "Modern dance brings a new concept of dance. It takes time for most people to understand it," he said, adding that the company would continue to hold such college tours in Beijing and also around China.

The international segment of the modern dance festival will kick off on May 5, and a student performance exhibition on May 21.

## The Dawn Breaks Silence of Mainstream Drama

By Zhu Lin

'Dawns Here Are Quiet', a drama adapted from a Russian novel of the same name is currently showing at the Capital Theatre. Compared with the recent steady stream of experimental dramas, mainstream drama has been notably absent from Beijing theatres in recent years.

Telling the story of a group of female soldiers on the Russian front during the Second World War, the original novel was written by Boris Vasiliev. Chinese audiences over the age of 40 are familiar with the story, since the film version, directed by Stanislav Rostotsky was very popular in the 1960s.

The soldiers, women no older than 20, all die one by one during the fighting. Director Zha Mingzhe once studied the drama in Russia. In expressing the moments when one is shot, he marks the moment by suddenly changing the light, and the



By Zhu Lin

*Where Have All the Flowers Gone*, a movie directed by pop singer and songwriter Gao Xiaosong, has finally been given the nod by the censors and will start screening in Beijing during the May Day Holiday.

One of the lead roles is played by another pop star, Pu Shu. The story starts on the first day of college for two freshmen.

The structure of the movie is loose, in keeping with the dreamy world of "college time" the characters inhabit. The

stage turns back to the past. Many in the audience cried at seeing the girls' innocent faces in love and dreams.

The lead role is played by Zhang Fengyi, star of Chen Kaige's *Farewell, My Concubine*. "I hadn't performed in a theatre since graduation," he said. Zhao Youliang, director of the China National Theatre highly praised his performance, saying "Zhang is such a wonderful stage actor!" It is his portrayal of the character that wins the audiences' hearts.

*Dawns Here Are Quiet* is the first work presented by the newly-founded China National Drama Theatre. No matter the style of the work, what really matters is whether it can touch people's hearts. "It's been a long time since I saw such vivid depiction of characters on the Chinese theatre stage," said Xiao Di, a member of the audience. "Many experimental dramas make me doubt whether the cast do enough preparation before staging their works."

Photo by Cui Jun

## Exotic Dance Fires on Beijing

By Xiao Xia  
*Lord of Dance*, the epic-style production lit up the stage of the Great Hall of the People last Friday and Saturday night.

The 120 minute dance, presented by more than 100 dancers from Europe, included styles ranging from Turkish belly dance to New Orleans tap.

*Lord of Dance*, which has given 75 performances in Europe to some 400,000 spectators has no doubt caught the hearts of Beijingers with its exotic passion.

Photo by Lu Beifeng



## Ban on Pop Star's Movie Lifted

soundtrack is provided by popular singers and bands, including Tian Zhen and Ling Dian (Zero Degrees).

The movie, which Gao started working on in 1999, was banned by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television last year following a pre-release screening. "They

thought some of the characters' words in my movie were 'too sharp,' says Gao, "and they asked me to make some changes." This April, a revised version was submitted for assessment, and was given the thumbs up.

However Gao insists that he's kept the original style of the movie, "What satisfies me the most is the style. In order to reveal the mood of the characters directly on the screen, I have broken with the classical way of filming."



Zhou Xun

## Big Shots Enlist In Sports Soap

By Xiao Xia

A new soap opera is to debut on May 25 on dozens of TV stations around China, revolving around sport. Several big names from China's entertainment and sports circles, including Jiang Wen, Ge You and Olympic champions Xing Aowei and Li Xiaopeng will appear in the series.

At a press conference to launch the soap last week, Guo Donglin, who plays the lead character, revealed that the first 50 of the 260 episode series will focus on the Chinese soccer team's World Cup tour. The series is scheduled to run until the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

## CCTV Launches New Channel On Wild West

By Xiao Xia

China Central Television Station (CCTV) is to launch a new channel on May 12 according to CCTV director Zhao Huayong.

The new channel, channel 12, will focus mainly on China's western regions and the development drive there. "Channel 12 will develop a wide cooperation with 12 regional TV stations from the western region," says Zhao Huayong, who sees the new channel as a trial of CCTV's inner channel reform.

Channel 12 is the second comprehensive channel in CCTV apart from channel 1. The 18 hour daily program will include news, information, features and also entertainment.

## From Comic Strip To Stage

By Zhao Pu

A theatrical version of *Pink Lady*, a popular work by Taiwanese comic illustrator Zhu Deyong, is now showing at the mini theatre of the

People's Art Theater. Instead of regular actors, director Lin Zhaohua (*Three Sisters Waiting for Godot*), who adapted the work for the stage, cast model Wang Haizhen in the lead female role and singer and TV compere Dai Jun plays the only male role. Though many theatregoers found the co-operation of the attractive model and handsome singer on the stage appealing, their evident lack of professional acting experience proves a disappointment.

*Pink Lady* revolves around the daily life of four unnamed young women sharing an apartment. Besides Pink Lady there are Work Mania, Marriage Mania and Naive Girl, all of whom hold differing attitudes toward love and marriage.

Wang Haizhen in drama *Pink Lady*  
Photo by Cui Jun

## Movies



## A Beautiful New World

Directed by Shi Runjiu, starring Jiang Wu, Tao Hong, 1999, 100 minutes. Peter Loehr, the producer of *Shower* and *Spicy Love Soup*, has come up with another comedy and another winner. A country bumpkin (played by Jiang Wu) wins a luxury Shanghai apartment in a lottery. He meets a hard-edged big city cousin (played by Tao Hong) and they become unlikely roommates. His country ways and her brassy street smarts create some hilarious moments and lead, eventually, to an upbeat ending. With English subtitles. **Where:** Cherry Lane Movies, Conference Hall, Sino-Japanese Youth Exchange Center, 40 Liangmaqiaolu, 1km east of Lufthansa Center. **When:** May 10, 8pm. **Admission:** 50 yuan. Tel: 6461-5318/9.



## Roma Citta Aperta (Open City)

Directed by Roberto Rossellini, 1945. Language: Italian with English subtitles. Acclaimed as "Europe's first post-war masterpiece" and winner of the Best Picture Award at the 1946 Cannes Film Festival, the film stars Anna Magnani and Aldo Fabrizi as an impoverished mother-to-be and a parish priest whose loyalties are tested by the German forces that occupy their homeland during World War II. **Where:** Cultural Office of the Italian Embassy, 2 Sanlitun Dong'erjie. **When:** May 9, 7pm. **Admission:** free. Tel: 6532-2187.

## Trips

## China Cultural Adventures — Enjoy Peking Opera

Peking Opera is an appealing performance, which enjoys popularity among Chinese people and foreign visitors. A chance to experience this opera first hand through the cultural adventure. Schedule: 4:50pm, demonstration & introduction a Peking Opera actor. 5:30-6:30pm, dinner (traditional Beijing food); 7:15pm, Peking Opera face painting demonstration and performance at the Liyuan Theater; 9:30pm, return to Lido Hotel. **Where:** meet in the Lido Lobby. **When:** May 12, 3:30pm. **Cost:** 300 yuan (round trip transportation, lecture expenses, dinner and performance admission). **Tel:** 6538-6008, 1370 1008739 (Zhao Ruimin). Please register before May 8. **E-mail:** ruiminzhao@yahoo.com.cn

## Tour of Xian Nong Tan

This temple was used during the Ming and Qing dynasties to perform harvest rituals. **Where:** meet at 1:50pm at the gate of the Xianlongtan Stadium, 200 meters south of the east gate of the Temple of Heaven. **When:** May 11, 2:40pm. **Admission:** 25 yuan. Tel: 8462-2081, 1350 1035145.

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language exchange and accommodation info for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com

By Priscilla / Lydia

## Music

## High Mountains &amp; Flowing Waters Concert

Folk music by China Films Orchestra hosted by folk music master Cao Jie. Enjoy music with tea and flowers. **Where:** Qiyunxuan, Minghui Teahouse, Dajue Temple, Xishan, Bei'anhexiang, Haidian District, bus 346 to Zhoujiagang, or drive from the Summer Palace along Yiyanglu to Wenguan intersection, then turn left.

**When:** May 5, 6, 8-9:30pm. **Admission:** 260 yuan. Tel: 6246-1567, 6246-1568.

## FM3, New Drama Group, Panda Tune and 516 Feng

Presented by MSG on double Thursdays. **Where:** CD Cafe, Dongsanhuanlu, Chaoyang District. **When:** May 9. Tel: 1301 1886112.

## Jia 55 Events in May

Hu Zi, live with laptop, records and instruments, every Wednesday; Mandala, founded by Gao Hu and Huang Weiwei with their chill out music, every Thursday; Staffer3, the most interesting minimal\micro\ambient musician with his laptop and other equipment, every Friday; DJ Damon and Mandala, bring funky electro stuff, every Saturday. **Where:** Jia 55 Bar, Jia 55, Xingfuyicun, opposite the north gate of Workers' Stadium. Tel: 1301 1886112.

## Exhibitions

## First Jiangsu Culture &amp; Art Treasures Exhibition

Three parts: antiques from Jiangsu (Century Hall), traditional handicrafts, skills of spinning and weaving, and embroidery. Also 200 potted landscapes from south China will be exhibited there. **Where:** Chinese Millennium Monument, A9, Fuxinglu, Haidian District. **When:** till May 12. **Admission:** free. Tel: 6851-3322.

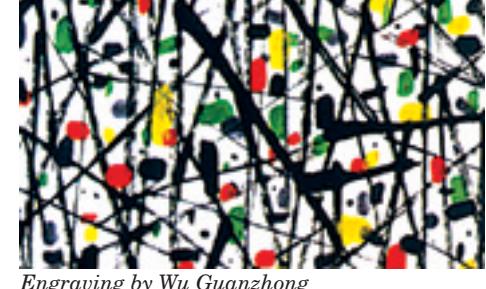
## Oil Paintings of Beijing Artists

More than 50 works by Wei Tianlin, Jin Shangyi, Wei Qimei. Collected by Beijing Mainland Artists Gallery, 30 oil paintings from the Qing Dynasty show changes of history, traditional clothes and culture. **Where:** Cafe, Art Museum, Chinese Millennium Monument. **When:** till May 12. Tel: 6851-3322.

## Original Creation and Reproduction

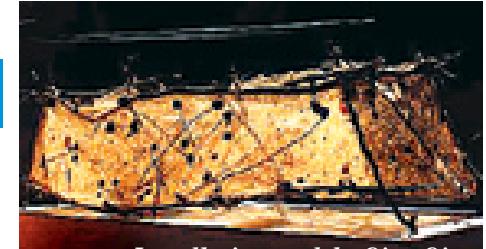
Wu Guanzhong's engravings & Picasso's collotype printed paintings. **Where:** New Millennium Art Gallery, 2F, Diyang Tower, Dongsanhuan Beilu, Chaoyang District. **When:** till May 12, 9am-7pm. **Admission:** free. Tel: 8453-6193.

## Engraving by Wu Guanzhong



## Oil Paintings by Xiao Hong and Feng Feng

Xiao's works feature stories and figures of ancient Chinese murals. Feng uses colors of the Chinese imperial palace and cleverly combines Chinese ancient books and seals. **Where:** Qin Gallery, 1-1-E, Huawei, north of Beijing Curio City, Chaoyang District (move to the new address after May 10). **When:** till May 12. **Admission:** free. Tel: 6507-4062.



## Qing Qing Returns — Qing Qing's Solo Exhibition

After three years' silence, Qing Qing will present her installation works made of linen and other materials. **Where:** Red Gate Gallery, Dongbianmen Watchtower, Chongwenmen. **When:** May 11-June 5, 10am-5pm, Tue-Sun. Preview: May 11, 3-5pm. **Admission:** free. Tel: 6525-1005.

## Sports

## Salsa and Latin Aerobics

Salsa starts on May 11, six-lesson workshop. Every Monday night, Latin dance class, members can join free. Promotion: any single or couple who joins Evolution Fitness for six month or more, pays no joining fee (save 1,500 yuan). Instructor: Alejandro, from Venezuela. **Where:** Evolution Fitness Center, Dabai office building, behind the Motorola Tower.

**When:** Every Saturday, 2-3pm (Salsa). **Price:** 500 yuan, 300 yuan for members (for 6 classes). Tel: 6567-0266, 6567-3499. **Web:** www.evolution-fitness.com

## Hiking — The High Rise

**Where:** Changping County, north of

## Party

## Mid-week Rescue

Music, 300 bottles of free beer for early arrivals. All night vodka, tequila and whisky 15 yuan. Happy hour 7:30-8:30pm, every drink is 10 yuan. Fresh pizza courtesy of The Den. **Where:** Vics, north gate of Workers' Stadium. **When:** May 15, 7:30pm- 2am. **Admission:** free. Tel: 1390 1022644 (in Chinese), 1380 1116216 (in English). **Web:** www.cureshot.com/Mid-WeekRescue.htm



Grand Hyatt Chef Jack Awyong rarely does one thing at a time

Photos by Cui Jun

## He Likes His Meat without Bones

By Jerry Ho

**O**ne sip rips open the interview.

The tea is of the most common type, available at any Chinese restaurant, routine and free to all. Few even notice the taste. Chef Jack Awyong frowns.

"Why does this tea taste salty?"

Indeed, on second taste, something is funny about the taste.

Awyong calls a waitress, who explains the water supplied that day was like that.

"But why don't you replace it with bottled water?" he says.

Then he orders the manager, who comes over and refills all the cups with fresh water.

### Humble origins

He is quite unlike other chefs. Starting as a chore man at 17, today Awyong is the 19th executive chef of the Grand Hyatt.

He has worked for 20 years in Singapore, Guam, China and now Grand Hyatt Beijing. His articulacy seems more appropriate to an experienced movie star than a chef.

"How can we convince customers that we can cook good food if we can't even make tea?" says Awyong and then drops the subject.

Fuss over, Awyong continues with our standard interview.

Soon his attention grows distracted again. He stares at a corner of the room where guests are calling for quicker dishes. He again stops a waitress.

"Go check what is happening there," says Awyong.

The dishes come in a short while, but the guests complain about the service as they are in a hurry to leave and the fruit had not come.

Awyong's face turns purple.

He pulls out a big notepad



Chef Awyong prepares home style food at the Grand Cafe

and then with furious strokes begins jotting something down. When the interview finishes, he charges straight for the kitchen, clutching the pad.

### Fruity Fellow

Rain douses the arid capital when Awyong next meets *Beijing Today* 5:30 in the morning to take us with him to the wholesale fruit market at Sidaokou on his fortnightly rounds.

As the cab exits Oriental Plaza, Awyong abruptly, and gravely, reminds the driver of turning on the meter.

Actually the meter is already running. He just hadn't noticed, as it was positioned below the seat.

"There are always unlicensed places outside our hotel," he says "Ready to swindle our guests by turning off the meter."

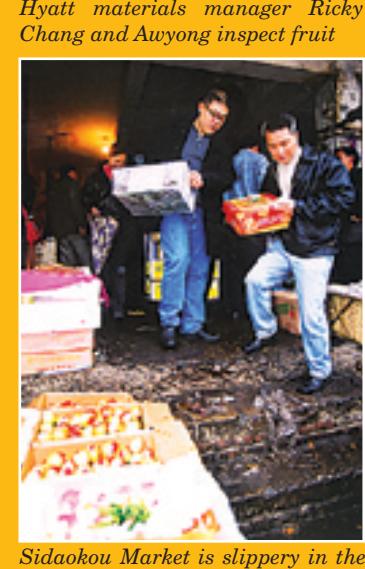
Our accompanying photographer gapes at Awyong, startled by his candor in front of the driver. It is suggested that it must be pretty hard to work for him.

"I am a tough man, just like Premier Zhu Rongji," says Awyong. "We have to be tough and strict to maintain the hotel at a high standard."

As Awyong tells it, everybody in Singapore is straightforward and speaks out his or her mind on everything, no matter whether they are right or wrong, without the guile and defensiveness sometimes associated with Chinese culture.

Oblivious to the rain and mud, he splashes into the crowd of peddlers, pawing fruit booths and trucks, obviously enjoying his inspection.

"Fruits and seafood are the basic materials in a restaurant that offer the most variety of quality," he says, tossing aside another failure.



Sidaokou Market is slippery in the rain

"I make my tour in Sidaokou and Hongqiao every two weeks to look into the market changes as I believe I should learn from those housewives who are always able to find the freshest and cheapest vegetables."

Almost one ton of fruits is consumed by the hotel each day and so Awyong better get it right.

Awyong said he remembers a man they all called "the melon king". He delivered watermelons that looked good, but tasted bad. One day, Awyong called the king's suppliers to the hotel and asked them to eat the fruits they delivered. They proved reluctant.

"They knew exactly about the taste of everything they were selling. How could they sell to me and then to my guests what they refused to eat themselves?" says Awyong.

### When I grow up

Back from the rain and into his cosy 6-square-meter office. Two tanks are filled with crea-

tures from the seafood market. There are sculptures of various Chinese traditional styles, including hills, fishermen, cranes and two tortoises.

A modest frame by his desk holds depicts two boys at the door of their home, and a portrait of an elegant woman.

"That is my mother ... a daring and dedicated lady," says Awyong. "She could have become a great person ..."

"My father, a Singaporean businessman, went to Indonesia as an illegal immigrant and married my mother to obtain lawful citizenship. When the two countries broke off relations, my parents went back to Singapore with me and my brother."

Only then did Awyong's mother Yong Ailin discover his father Awyong Chweetou already had another wife in his hometown.

"My father had always been busy with his business and seldom came home," he says. "He died when I was 14. We then had to rent a small house by the side of my father's big house."

For Awyong and brother Martin Awyong, their best food was "bones without meat".

"I used to swear one day when I was grown up, we would eat meat without any bones."

As his mother had no legal citizenship, she never dared to get involved in trouble with anybody, advance her career or even fall sick.

"She taught we two brothers at an early age to be strong and tough men. Don't let people trick you twice."

### Champion chef

At 22, Awyong captained the Singapore junior team's first appearance at the World Culinary Art Festival in Vancouver, Canada. They won the championship.

The prizes Awyong has won since then fill up two pages on his personal resume. "Toys in life," he calls them. Now 37, he is invited to judge and appraise at international contests.

Awyong said his biggest wish was to organize a Chinese team for that kind of contest.

"I have another small wish — to set up a modern hotel management school in Beijing. If we invite the right people to be teachers, it will be great help for the progress of the whole hotel industry in China. I am ready to offer my talent and ability."

## Small Eats (小吃了)



Youch or yessir?

## How Much Do You Love Your City?

By Wang Dandan

Its benefits include proteins, Vitamin C, rough fibers and useful sugar, as well as clearing Chinese traditional "heat" from the body, warming traditional "yang" in the human body, aiding digestion, stimulating appetite, removing toxicity and reducing tension. Empress Dowager Cixi loved it.

It's also green. And it tastes like, well...unique.

It is said if you can't drink douzhi'er (豆汁儿), you are not a true Beijinger. This pungent soy juice plays a leading role in Beijing snacks and for most foreigners, is the ultimate test of "going native," the final definition of an "acquired taste".

But Beijingers, allegedly, love it.

The ancient *Capital Beijing Snack Anecdotes* (北京小吃逸事) book depicted it as "pig food" that plays the same role as porridge. "No matter whether it is thin or thick, no matter who you are, come here and taste with vinegar or salt", the juice attracted people with its unique briny taste, the book's author wrote.

How is it cooked? The juice is a by-product of cooking mung bean starch (or vermicelli). First, the mung bean is soaked in water until its peel comes off, then it is ground into a thin pulp before being poured into an urn.

In the urn, it ferments, with the bottom layer starch and the surface layer the sacred Beijing juice.

Diluted fermented juice then undergoes repeated juice additions when heated to boiling point in a pot and then kept on a slow heat to stay warm.

The "pig food" is still beloved by a fun minority of old Beijingers.

As early as the Liao and Song dynasties, the soy juice was popular. In 1753, it was reported in the *Capital Beijing Snack Anecdotes* "there emerges a strange matter called soy juice. A minister Zhe Yunbu has gone for an inspection to see if the juice is clean and edible. The royal family can hire two or three workers to cook the juice for royal use."

From then on, common soy juice became royal palace cuisine. Douzhi'er is served with very narrow pickles and fried dough circles. The pickles are usually mature pickled cabbage with pepper oil.

Where: Huguo Restaurant, Xinjiekounan Dajie.

Open: 5:30am-9pm

Tel: 6618-1427



Sushi at the Shangri-La

Photo by Li Shuzhan

## Chef Rates Cherry Blossom

By Jiang Zhong

He pulls a cherry blossom leaf out of an air-sealed package and puts it under the reporter's nose.

"Smell!" says Chef Harayama.

"It's the same as those on the tree. Thirty yuan each, imported from Japan."

Nishimura Restaurant chef Harayama has prepared eight dishes for a banquet at Cherry Blossom Kaiseki on the second floor of the Shangri-la Hotel.

"Maybe you will not notice any difference between the cherry blossom dishes and other traditional Japanese dishes in the flavor," says Harayama. "However, you will gain a strange cherry blossom cultural experience."

Each detail is important for a Japanese dish, says Harayama. He turns over a green porcelain plate on the table.

"This plate was made by a Japanese artist who died 10 years ago. I bought it for 80,000 yen."

"Japanese clients will feel good if they are offered not only delicious food, but also expensive vessels when they sit in a Japanese restaurant," he says.

It doesn't matter if clients don't understand Japanese catering culture, he says. The food is most important after all.

Three kinds of sashimi, silver cod fish robatayaki with special Japanese sauce, broiled eel fish rice cake with spring flower, three kinds of leaf tempura and "Sakura" sushi are included in the banquet.

**Tip:** order the Cherry Blossom kaiseki in advance. The chef needs at least 15 minutes for preparation of each dish.

**Reservation tel:** 6841-2211 ext. 2721

**Where:** Nishimura Restaurant, Shangri-La Hotel, 29 Zizhuyuan Road, Beijing.

## Drinks

### Ugandans Break Out Brand

By Li Dan

They have a neat sales pitch for the two experts from Uganda who roast and serve coffee every day.

"We call it 'coffee diplomacy,'" says Li Yanbing, General Manager of (Sino-Uganda) Beijing Chenao Coffee.

The first Ugandan cooperation project in China, the Crane Coffee brand was launched last month in the International Conference Center. The Uganda government has lent support and financial help, optimistic about the quality of their national java.

It is said Ugandan coffee is mostly organically grown in fertile soil, with arabicas 2,000 meters and robustas 900 meters above sea level.

Ugandan coffee, grown in a climate averaging between 15-28 Centigrade, has unique characteristics ideal for the European espresso market.

**Add:** Crane Cafe, 2nd floor of International Conference Center. The cafe has African decoration.

**Open:** daily, 9am-5pm.  
**Tel:** 8498-3098



Uganda's national emblem is the crane

Photo by Zhuang Jian